

Speak up & be heard

CONSUMER REGISTER lists summaries of major consumer proposals before Federal agencies. If you wish to submit written comments, include your name & address, state the name & *Federal Register* citation of the proposal on which you are commenting and explain your views briefly & clearly.

Sorbitol

Effective Dec. 8, Agriculture Dept. will permit processors to use the food additive sorbitol in frankfurters & others sausage products.

Last December meat-packing companies proposed a regulation that would permit sorbitol in sausage products for use as an optional flavoring agent, to make it easier to remove artificial casing from products after processing & to reduce charring when sausages are cooked directly on heated metal surfaces.

As adopted by Agriculture, the regulation will permit sorbitol to be used in any amount up to 2% of the sausage's weight (excluding water). Sorbitol will not be permitted when corn syrup & corn solids are used in sausages.

Food & Drug Administration already permits the use of sorbitol in candies, other confections & several drugs. Sorbitol occurs naturally in some fruits & berries.

Details—*Federal Register*: Dec. 17, 1971, page 24005; Nov. 9, page 23822; CONSUMER NEWS: Jan. 15.

Pacifiers

Dec. 16 is deadline for comments on a Food & Drug Administration proposal to ban baby pacifiers that do not meet the following standards:

- The guard must be at least 1½ inches in diameter if it is made of a flexible material; otherwise it must be at least 1½ inches;
- The handle or ring must be hinged or collapsible;
- The pacifier must be completely sterile;
- It must be in one piece—or designed so it cannot be broken apart when tested; under no circumstances could a baby swallow or be cut by the pacifier or any part of it;
- It cannot consist of any food.

Details—*Federal Register*: Oct. 18, page 22000. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Cosmetics

Jan. 1 is deadline for comments on proposals to set up procedures by which cosmetics makers, distributors & dealers may voluntarily report to Food & Drug Administration on allergic reactions & injuries caused by their products.

The intent of the proposals is to provide FDA & the cosmetics industry with reliable information for use in evaluations of cosmetics & in answering public health questions about cosmetics.

Both FDA & Cosmetic, Toiletry & Fragrance Association have proposed procedures. Both proposals define pro-

cedures for voluntary reporting by businesses, & both define how confidential information, such as cosmetic formulas, would be handled. FDA's proposal, however, would cover more types of cosmetic products & more types of adverse reactions & would expand the list of companies expected to report to FDA.

The reporting would be in addition to voluntary registration of cosmetics firms with FDA & voluntary filing of formulas with FDA.

Details—*Federal Register*: Aug. 11, page 16208; Nov. 2, page 23344; CONSUMER REGISTERS Sept. 1; CONSUMER NEWS: May 1. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Federal Register

Administrative Committee of the Federal Register will change the format of *Federal Register* on Jan. 2 to give consumers more readable & intelligible statements of proposed & adopted Federal rules & regulations.

The *Federal Register*, published since 1936, is a daily compilation of proposed & final regulations of Federal agencies & departments.

Each notice in the *Federal Register* will now begin with a summary of its contents & discuss the basic issues in clear English. (When used with announcement of new rules & regulations, the opening summary will include any major differences between the original proposal & the adopted proposal.)

Each proposed rule will give the deadline date for comments. At present, the deadline is stated as a total number of days; for example, "within thirty (30) days after publication of this notice in the *Federal Register*." The new specific deadline date will give the precise month, day & year so that there will be less chance of consumers & others misunderstanding the final day for submitting comments.

(The administrative committee noted that many of the comments to its original proposal on July 27 stated that Federal agencies should allow a minimum time period for comments on controversial issues. The suggested period was 45 days. However, the committee has stated that the time period for comments is a responsibility of the agency submitting the proposal, not the *Federal Register*.)

Another change will be in the publication days. Instead of using the present Tuesday through Saturday publication days, the *Federal Register* will use a Monday through Friday schedule.

Details—*Federal Register*: July 27, page 15003; Nov. 4, page 23602; CONSUMER REGISTER: Aug. 15.

International food standards

Jan. 3 is deadline for comments requested by Food & Drug Administration on international food standards for frozen peas, canned sweet corn & nutritive sweeteners recommended by Codex Alimentarius Commission. Feb. 2 is deadline for comments on the Codex proposal for certain edible oils.

Codex Alimentarius Commission is an international agency created in 1963 by 2 United Nations agencies, Food & Agricultural Organization & World Health Organization. Some 92 countries, including the U.S., are members of the commission.

The purpose of international standards would be to ease food trade across national boundaries & afford consumers of any country with greater assurance of the quality, cleanliness & identity of imported foods.

FDA has stated that its policy will be to accept the recommended Codex standards insofar as the requirements of the standards can be shown to be reasonable & calculated to promote honesty & fair dealing in the interest of the American consumer.

Dr. Charles Edwards, FDA Commissioner, has asked interested groups—consumer, industry, professional & academic—to meet & discuss these standards before replying. He said that comments reflecting the consensus of different groups will be given special weight.

At present, some 200 standards are in various stages of preparation by the commission. It has been working for the past 7 years to establish standards.

Consumers seeking additional information can write to the Office of Consumer Services, Food & Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Details—*Federal Register*: Oct. 5, page 21101.

Cyclamates

Returnable soft drink bottles manufactured before the Food & Drug Administration ban on cyclamates & labeled that their contents contain cyclamates may continue to be used by bottlers if

- They are sold in multi-unit (for example, "6-packs") cartons bearing clear & prominent information about the beverage's true caloric & carbohydrate content;
- The carton also contains appropriate warnings to diabetics;
- They are sold in vending machines carrying the same sort of information in prominent & durable form;
- Each bottle cap says "contains sugar" or "contains carbohydrates" & gives accurately the caloric & carbohydrate content per fluid ounce.

The FDA proposal, published July 11 & now adopted, received support from 17 consumers & consumer groups, 2 soft drink bottlers & one ecology interest group.

Details—*Federal Register*: July 11, page 13556; Nov. 8, page 23715; *CONSUMER REGISTER*; Aug. 15.

Canned fruit standards

Jan. 7 is deadline for comments on a Food & Drug Administration proposal to add to the allowable list of liquids (packing media) used in canning apricots, prunes, seedless grapes, cherries, berries, plums & figs.

As filed by the National Canners Association, the proposal would permit the optional use of packaging ingredients not now used. Under the proposal, for example,

- Juice in the can could come from any one fruit juice or a blend of 2 or more fruit juices. The juice need not be the same as the fruit in the can;

- Juices can be fresh, canned, frozen or reconstituted from concentrates;

- The name of the juice or juices would have to appear on the label, just as in the case with the packing media currently used.

Details—*Federal Register*: Nov. 8, page 23730. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Labeling

Jan. 9 is deadline for comments on a Food & Drug Administration proposal to prohibit packaging of hazardous household products in containers that children or adults may mistake for packages of food.

Packages that must be changed include:

- Containers illustrated or labeled like a food, drug or cosmetic,
- Metal cans with a "pull-ring" throwaway opener,
- Milk-type cartons.

Details—*Federal Register*: Nov. 10, page 23924. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Mutual funds

Securities & Exchange Commission has scheduled hearings Dec. 11 in Washington, DC to consider how mutual funds could be sold at competitive prices to investors.

Consumers who wish to testify or submit written comments can write to Allan S. Mostoff, Director, Division of Investment Company Regulation, 500 N. Capitol St., NW, Washington, DC 20549 by Dec. 6. The hearing will begin there at 10 A.M. Dec. 11 in room 776.

Details—*Federal Register*: Nov. 17, page 24449; Nov. 18, page 24711.

Also noteworthy

Auto air pollution—Environmental Protection Agency rules on 1973 & later car emission standards. *FR*: Nov. 15, p. 24249.

Low-acid canned foods—Food & Drug Administration proposes good manufacturing standards. *FR*: Nov. 14, p. 24118.

This listing is intended only as summary coverage of selected *Federal Register* items deemed of particular interest to consumers, & it does not affect the legal status or effect of any document required or authorized to be published pursuant to Section 5 of the Federal Register Act as amended, 44 U.S.C. 1505. *Federal Register* is published Tuesday through Saturday (except days after Federal holidays) by Office of the Federal Register, National Archives & Records Service, General Services Administration, Washington, DC. Subscriptions cost \$2.50 a month or \$25 a year & may be ordered from Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The superintendent also sells individual copies of *Federal Register* for 20¢ each. Copies of *Federal Register* usually are available in public, college & university libraries.

